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COMMUNITY SERVICE NEWSLETTER is published six times a year by Community Service, Inc. Our purpose is to promote the small community as a basic social institution, involving organic units of economic, social, and spiritual development.

smallness and the small town

by Harold S. Williams

(Excerpted and paraphrased from an article in the October 1977 issue of *Small Town*, Small Towns Institute, P. O. Box 517, Ellensburg, WA. 98926. Harold Williams will be one of the resource people at the Community Service Conference "Building Community Where You Are", in Yellow Springs, Ohio, July 28-30.)

According to the 1970 census, Vermont is the most rural state in the nation. In 1929, Sinclair Lewis said he liked it because it was not driven mad by the American mania that considers a town of 4,000 twice as good as a town of 2,000. At some point, the logic of bigness as betterness comes to an absurd end. But Dorothy Canfield Fisher disagreed: Vermont is hard on the dependent and subnormal. In smallness, as in bigness, not everyone is favored.

If we seek smallness, whether in work or living, we must understand where we have been and where we are going. Otherwise, we are no more than the proverbial American who redoubles his effort when he has forgotten his objective.

A small town is both an example of something called community and a community example of something called smallness.

Small Town in the Past

Most of the greatest cities in antiquity--Athens, Carthage, later Florence, were by today's standards very small towns. What we consider

provincial because of size was to the Greeks full of philosophy, commerce and drama. To Plato the ideal polis should have in it 5,040 citizens (heads of family). For hundreds of years, political philosophers considered that a democracy or republic had to be, by modern standards, quite tiny.

In the U. S., until the early twentieth century, the basic form of social organization to most people was the small town, with the exception of families and churches.

In the role of shaping values, the small town has supplied leadership to the nation out of proportion to its population, and has been critically important in American life.

Changes in the Small Town

School consolidation, chain-owned stores, absentee ownership, an increasing array of governmental programs and policies--all these have helped change the small community from a distinct unit into one spot among many where the mass society is practiced.

Many people will argue that, despite changes, small towns do retain clear differences, with more emphasis on personal relations and a slower pace. But many small towns have not only changed: in Iowa alone, according to Page Smith, 2,205 towns, villages, and country post offices were identified as officially abandoned.

Importance in Our Future

However, the small town still remains the dominant form of the American community. This is not to say that more people live in small towns than in other community sizes but rather that there are simply more of them. There is, however, a much more important point. We are all aware of the dominant trend in our 20th century population--a large-scale migration of people from more rural to more urban places. It continued unabated through most of the 1960s. But census data in the past several years are suggesting a dramatic and largely unanticipated turnaround. People are moving back to the small towns and rural areas--including those not adjacent to metropolitan areas.

The small town is a vitally needed counterpart to the disappearance of our face-to-face institutions. Loss of ties to family and place have made us increasingly dependent on centralized authorities, making us vulnerable in time to totalitarian control.

Smallness as a Theme...

Frequent and growing references are heard to smaller things within larger counterparts--"smallness" words, such as HUD switching its money from "urban renewal" to "neighborhood preservation".

In the 40's and 50's Schumacher's "Small is Beautiful" would have been seen as a radical treatise, since the concept of tiny undertakings replacing a handful of larger organizations was almost unthinkable. Today the book is a best seller.

My own view, widely shared, is that bigness and smallness are not only both inevitable but both desirable. Each can be beautiful or ugly depending upon the circumstance, the perspective, the need. To argue that our nation should be solely constituted of tiny businesses is no more tenable than the belief that the "Fortune 500" companies should control all business.

Most smallness advocates do not disagree. Their point is that we are far too quick to oversize solutions than to undersize them--whether in technological, economic, political, or social realms. Their concern is that bigness is pre-

sently the path of least resistance. As Dr. Schumacher has observed,

It is my experience that it is rather more difficult to recapture directness and simplicity than to advance in the direction of ever more sophistication and complexity. Any third-rate engineer or researcher can increase complexity; but it takes a certain creative flair of real insight to make things simple again.

What Difference Does the Concept of Scale Really Make?

What can best be done by a neighborhood and what by a city? Who benefits from going to a small college and who needs a large university? What kinds of people thrive as entrepreneurs in the small business and as leaders of corporations? We really don't know. In case after case, truisms evaporate when we ask about data. Yet, empirical evidence is important if we are not to mislead ourselves and watch people make bad choices, poor fits.

We need evidence. But we also need theory. Concepts such as decentralization, often lack any base as to what is to be achieved...what outcomes we can expect. There are assuredly tools within disciplines--"critical mass" and "economies of scale" concepts of economists, for example, "central place theory" of geographers, "diffusion" from sociology and anthropology--but very little with an overall perspective.

And, finally, we need examples of smallness at work.

For every 1,000 people who discuss appropriate technology, I wish we had one who could fashion or invent an appropriate technology. As the Farmer's Almanac once said, "Actions speak louder than words--but not so often".



readers write

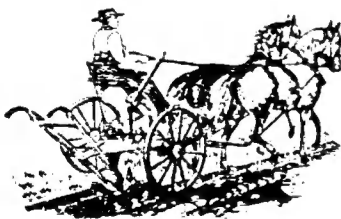
CAN EVERYONE BE IN SMALL COMMUNITY

Reading the article (May-June 1978 Newsletter) by Jack Miller, leads me to commend to you and the group which will be meeting later this month the article in the December 1977 issue of Harper's entitled "The Road Less Traveled" by Erazim Kohak, of the Department of Philosophy at Boston University.

While this included many interesting points, it helped me in particular answer a question which articles like Miller's, and the whole "small community" movement as a matter of fact, have raised for me. If not everyone has even the remote possibility of living in a small face-to-face relationship with the world's population as it is today, what validity does this approach have?

If we think of it not as something which is universally possible, but as a metaphor which it is important to live as a demonstration of a vital principle - the link between love and labor - then for skeptical intellectuals like myself who need to see a logical justification for what they would like to support the basic idea gains a new validity.

David Scull, Virginia



ABOUT ARTHUR MORGAN'S "SOCIAL ENGINEERING"

I can readily understand how David Moore might be "turned off" by the concept of "social engineering" as referred to in Arthur Morgan's biography. A brief reference to part of Arthur Morgan's history may however be illuminating.

The first big engineering job he had was the drainage of the St. Francis Valley in eastern Arkansas, a vast tract of malaria-ridden swampland along the Mississippi. The soil was rich, the climate good and large population centers were nearby with excellent transportation facilities. The project was sound by all ecological and economic criteria and Arthur Morgan wrote, at the time, of his vision of prosperous farms and pleasant villages emerging in this new land.

The hydraulic engineering was excellent, but there was no social engineering. Timber barons logged off the cypress at one swoop and rich investors gobbled up the land and planted it to cotton. Sharecropping developed, with most of the population living in abject squalor: some of the worst exploitation in America. When I drove across the area some years ago people were still living in unpainted shacks, often without even a privy, and pleasant villages were not to be found.

Arthur Morgan learned his lesson. After that on every engineering job he did or on which he served as consultant, he kept a sharp eye on the social and political context of the work. This was true in the Miami Conservancy District in Ohio, where he built model villages instead of crude construction camps--and made them pay off, and where left-over wilderness lands were converted into public parks. It was true in the TVA in many ways. As a consultant on the Volta River Project in Ghana he found the government and the civil engineers planning to flood a vast area without even telling the thousands of inhabitants that their lands would be flooded. (No social engineering at all!) He put a stop to that.

Social engineering as such is neither good nor bad. The real estate developer who builds a community of houses squarely on a flood plain, or in some other exploitive way, is a social engineer, and a bad one. Likewise the industrialist who exploits cheap labor. But social engineering can also be creative and release the best energies of the people, as Arthur Morgan has shown.

Ernest Morgan, North Carolina

viswanathan

EXCERPTS FROM VISWANATHAN'S LETTER OF APRIL 23, 1978

(Viswanathan is Director of Mitraniketan, an educational community in Kerala, South India.)

Certainly you have heard about the sad demise of Dr. Jean Kohler on the 28th of March. We had all anticipated this but we did not expect it to happen so soon. The Puget Sound University students and the faculty members numbering about 35 from Tacoma spent a month with us during February-March. I thought I could pay Jean Kohler a visit in June when I come over to the United States. However, the Almighty decided otherwise to put a mortal end at the earliest so that her soul could rest in peace. Although we had at times some differences of opinion in some minor details of her approach, her life contribution to Mitraniketan and to the people in the surrounding area for the promotion of health and family planning is something we all cherish with the deepest sense of gratitude.

Ignoring her hosts of friends, most loving parents and a very good environment in her home town, Tacoma, Dr. Kohler came over here with her only son to plunge herself into this rural environment and identified herself with the rural poor, which is itself a sign of magnanimity on her part. This can be realized only by those who could see her in her home environment as when I last visited her with my wife. I was asking myself why this lady wanted to come away to our poverty-stricken village from the beautiful and most friendly atmosphere in her home town? It was really a true sacrifice on her part. The saddest thing is that her life mission--which was to spend all her life in Mitraniketan until her end--remained an unfulfilled desire. Her passing away has created a big gap and we are now on the lookout to locate a suitable person to fill it. As a permanent memorial to her dedicated service for Rural Health and Family Planning we have named the new Health Building, which is yet to be completed with financial support from her friends in Washington State, after her as "Jean Kohler Arogya Bhavan".

You will be happy to know that two other sister organizations, Volkart Foundation and Sir Dorabji Tata Trust in Bombay, have contributed a yearly grant of Rs. 50,000/- for three years for the School Section and Health Programme, in addition to Rs. 45,000/- to set up a clinical laboratory for the Health Centre. We have now expanded our range of activities much more widely among the tribal areas as well as the other weaker sections in the countryside with training and extension arrangements.

At present we are involved in consolidating the education programme as an effective media for developmental change. Since the 24th of March, Sethu and I spent two weeks in Sri Lanka visiting a number of Rural Development Projects after which we participated in a Conference on Sarvodaya and World Development in which more than 15 countries took part. The Overseas Development Council had made it possible for me to attend the conference. I have to be with the Overseas Development Council in Washington, D. C. from this June 13th until the 18th. As there are a lot of other things I am involved in at home at State level and National level as a Member of the National Board of Adult Education, New Delhi, I will have to return as quickly as possible. Further, with the help of a few experts we have taken steps to consolidate and stabilize the activities which Mitraniketan has so far undertaken. At the same time I want to make use of this opportunity as best possible to meet old friends and still to make a few more. Of course it also goes without saying that Mitraniketan needs material and technical support at this stage.

We are all fine. But my recent travels and other pressing problems it seems have aggravated my diabetes and I am taking rest with medication to bring it under control.

Viswan, Mitraniketan, India

A committee has been formed at Epworth-Le-Sourd Methodist Church (which supported Dr. Kohler) to continue support of her work at Mitraniketan and its satellite Punalal, a few miles away. Those interested in helping may send their contributions to Mrs. Sophie Owen, Treasurer, Dr. Jean Kohler Committee, 3110 South 7th Street, Tacoma, Washington 98405.



Community service conference

BUILDING COMMUNITY WHERE YOU ARE -- JULY 28-30th

How can your daily life be a means of fostering community? Our summer conference this year is on Building Community Where You Are. The focus will be on the community as the basic unit of society and how your life makes a difference in community.

RESOURCE PEOPLE:



Baldemar Velasquez, leader of the Farm Labor Organizing Committee in northwestern Ohio and southern Michigan, is active in community organizing among migrant workers and the wider Mexican-American population.

Howard Cort, long time Community Service member, works for the State of New York and is active in the life of his home community of Ghent, New York.

Ken Champney is printer and co-publisher of the Yellow Springs News (for 28 years) and long time member of the Vale Community near Yellow Springs, Ohio.

Charlotte Williamson established an arts center and is active in her community in Illinois.

Hal Williams, from the Institute of Man and Science, works with the revitalization of former coal mining towns in New York and Pennsylvania.

T. Auxier, from Hindman Settlement School, Kentucky, will lead folk dancing.

Place: Outdoor Education Center of Antioch College, Yellow Springs, Ohio.

Time: Friday, July 28th, registration at 6:00 P.M. and first session at 7:30 P.M.; closing session, Sunday, July 30th, 1:00 P.M. The first meal will be Saturday breakfast.

Accommodations: Outdoor Education Center dorms with 16 bunks per room. There is room for 6 camp vehicles or tents. Campers must pre-register--first registered first served.

Cost: \$37 per person; \$32 if you camp or sleep at home rather than in the dorm. Children under 12, half price, infants under one year, free. The five meals are included.

Deposit: \$15 per person. Balance payable on arrival.

Bring: Sleeping bag or bedding and musical instruments, etc. If you forget bedding, it can be rented for an additional \$1.75.

To keep costs low and for fellowship, attenders are asked to help with meal preparation and cleanup. A few half scholarships may be applied for in advance. Note: Supper is not served Friday night. Program will start promptly at 7:30 P.M. Further program details and a map to the conference site will be provided upon receipt of the pre-registration.

Return this to: COMMUNITY SERVICE, INC., Box 243, Yellow Springs, Ohio 45387

Phones: (513) 767-2161 or 767-1461.

Name(s)

Phone

Address

Zip

I (we) plan to:

Number in party _____

_____ Sleep in O.E.C. dorms.

_____ Wish to apply for a campsite at O.E.C. If they are taken we will sleep in O.E.C. dorm.

_____ Attend by day, but will sleep at home.

_____ Wish to pay for a babysitter for a few hours. No. of children _____. Ages _____.
_____ \$15 per registrant enclosed.

death and life

WALTER KAHOE: AN APPRECIATION

by Margot Ensign

Walter Kahoe, longtime friend, colleague and biographer of Arthur Morgan, died March 26, 1978 in Philadelphia. He was a friend and contributor to Community Service since its early days. His family belonged to Yellow Springs, where his brother Howard was for many years city manager. From them he inherited a brilliant mind, keen Irish wit, warm spirit, vigorous work habits and personal integrity.

His association with the Morgan family began when he was a student at Antioch, and he and Ernest Morgan worked as printers on the same co-op job, later transferring to the fledgling Antioch Press. Walter, who had grown up in modest circumstances and hated to see anything wasted, was bothered at the sight of 3 inch strips of fine paper trimmed off and thrown away. So he conceived the idea of bookplates, which he printed but could not sell. He and Ernest Morgan then started the Antioch Bookplate Company which now sells about 90% of the bookplates in the United States.

When Arthur Morgan left Antioch to become first chairman of the TVA, he took Walter along as his personal assistant until Morgan's ousting in March 1938. During the long, weary months of Congressional Investigation that followed, Walter Kahoe was his faithful colleague and helper. To do this, he gave up a Full-bright post-graduate scholarship at Harvard.

From the TVA Walter went to Lippincott's, the publishers, where he became Vice-President and head of the medical books department. But he found that as an executive there were gaps in his life. He still loved printing so he set up a small shop in his basement, the Whimsie Press. Here his biography of Arthur Morgan was printed and published in October, 1977.

This was his last work. During the previous ten years he had helped Arthur Morgan extensively in writing and editing his history of the Army Corps of Engineers ("Dams and Other Disasters", 1971) and Morgan's story of the TVA ("The Making of the TVA", 1974).

We shall remember Walter Kahoe as a scholar, philosopher and friend with a delightful sense of humor. Following is Ernest Morgan's estimate of Walter's friendship with his father Arthur Morgan:

Arthur Morgan, as president of Antioch, was attracted by Walter's agile, inquiring mind and solid character, and the two became life-long friends. Walt held Arthur Morgan in high esteem, but not in awe, which suited the older man fine. They took much pleasure in discussing and sometimes arguing about philosophical and social matters, and each contributed to the other... When a close friend or a contemporary dies, a part of you dies also. I shall miss Walt very much.

RICHARD BURLING by Jane Morgan

We at Community Service were saddened but not surprised by the death of our dear friend and Community Service Board member, Richard L. Burling, on May 8, 1978. He died after a long and courageous struggle against cancer and for life.

Richard Burling moved to Yellow Springs in 1957 and taught physics at Central State University, Wilberforce, Ohio. He was a writer and lecturer on the subject of nuclear fallout hazards.

Richard was an active and valued member of the Board of Trustees of Community Service, its Executive Committee and its Land Trust Committee since its re-organization in 1970.

In 1971 Burling established the 20-acre V. C. Wynne-Edwards Memorial Sanctuary just outside of Yellow Springs. It is named after a distinguished zoologist of the University of Aberdeen, Scotland, whose books and lectures dealing with the way many animals limit their reproduction to accord with available space and resources had been an inspiration to him. On this property Burling had just last year completed a small home which he built with the help of a few friends and his son Tucker.

Richard's professional life and personal philosophy led him to value above all balance in life and nature. He believed that--

"The animals that share the earth with us are, as truly as are humans, endowed with certain inalienable rights." "...that small animals deserve a refuge from us, from our guns, highways, plows and people... Plants and animals live together in mutual interdependence."

Dick, as his friends knew him, was a man with a fine sense of humor and many talents, one of which was his ability to write amusing poetry. About six weeks before he died he wrote this limerick to encourage himself to get out of bed one morning when he did not feel like doing so:

"Each day, for each critter, since birth,
May well be its last day on earth.
So I'd better enjoy it
And gain'ly employ it;
This may be my last day on earth."

From THE CHAMBERED NAUTILUS
by Oliver Wendell Holmes

Build thee more stately mansions, O my soul,
As the swift seasons roll!
Leave thy low-vaulted past!
Let each new temple, nobler than the last,
Shut thee from heaven with a dome more vast,
Till thou at length art free,
Leaving thine outgrown shell by life's unresting
sea!

* * * * *
WEST COAST INTENTIONAL COMMUNITIES
CONFERENCE

August 22-27, 1978 at Harbin Hot Springs
north of San Francisco. Emphasis will be on
interpersonal and group dynamics. Write:
Communities Conference c/o Kerista Village,
P. O. Box 1174, San Francisco, Ca. 94101.

MICHIGAN CO-OP CAMP - 40TH

Circle Pines Center started in 1938 as an outgrowth of Ashland Folk School. Circle Pines (NE of Kalamazoo) is organized as a cooperative. Members volunteer labor for much of the camp center's maintenance. Programs on social and economic issues are open to non-members and members alike. Summer camp sessions featuring outdoor fun, work projects, crafts, swimming are conducted for children and for families. Write: Circle Pines Center, Rt #1, Box 312, Delton, MI 49046.



FELLOWSHIP HOUSE FARM SUMMER EVENTS

August 4-6th (Fri. to Sun.) - Workshop on RACISM TODAY -- An in-depth look at a world problem: William Guy, leader.

August 13-18th (Sun. to Fri.) - Family Camp: GAMES FAMILIES PLAY -- Jim Madison and Rosa Zimmerman of Farm staff will lead us in international and non-traditional games, in seeking ways to improve communication and interaction within families and to find joy in simple things! Cost based on \$165 for 2 adults and 1 child. Call the Farm for detailed flyer.

August 20-25th (Sun. to Fri.) - CHILDREN'S CELEBRATION -- Bernie DeKoven of the Games Preserve, author and well-known leader of New Games workshops, will act as consultant to Rosa Zimmerman and other Farm staff leading this program for children aged 9-12: to increase awareness of nature, to facilitate positive interaction between children (cooperation, creative use of conflict, better communication). Cost based on \$75 per child with scholarships available. Call the Farm for detailed flyer.
Write or call the Fellowship House Farm, R.D. 3, Sanatoga Road, Pottstown, PA 19464. Phone: 326-3008 or CH8-3343 (toll -free from Philadelphia) for information.

KOINONIA'S VOLUNTEER PROGRAM

Koinonia, a Christian community near Americus, Georgia, provides room and board for volunteer workers. Founded in 1942, this service oriented community has become known for its work with race relations, self-help housing, resettlement of share croppers on their own farms, not to mention excellent pecan and peanut products. Write Koinonia Partners, Route 2, Americus, Georgia 31709.

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STAFF

Margot Ensign, Don Hollister, Jane Folmer, Gris Morgan, and Jane Morgan, editor.

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